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Kantaprawira, Rusadi; Bainus, Arry; Kusumawardhana, Indra

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# The Unbreakable Relations between Indonesia-Vietnam Under “Sink the Vessels” Policy: A Complex Systems Approach

Rusadi Kantaprawira  
Arry Bainus  
Indra Kusumawardhana

Bakrie University  
Universitas Padjadjaran  
Universitas Pertamina

## Abstract

*The vibrant bilateral relations between Indonesia-Vietnam has been tested by the “Sink the Vessels policy”, a robust measure executed by Indonesia to tackle rampant illegal fishing that encroach Indonesian waters. The policy has caused in the demolition of, among else, Vietnamese fishing vessels; and has also led to near-clash and incidents at sea. Nevertheless, both countries bilateral relations were far from hostile condition, and uphold their neighbourly relations to manage the illegal fishing problem. How could Indonesia’s foreign policy action not further exacerbate Indonesia-Vietnam relations post “Sink the Vessels” policy? To tackle our question, this article probes to describe the complex systems underlying the relations between Indonesia and Vietnam during the rising tension. We argue that the complex systems encapsulated Indonesia – Vietnam relations post “Sink the Vessels” policy consist of symbol system, interest system, and role system that maintain their friendly bilateral relations, even in the turbulent ocean. This article exposes that Indonesia-Vietnam responds to tackle the problem stems primarily from the linkage between the three systems to escape the security dilemma.*

Key words: Indonesia, Vietnam, illegal fishing, sink the vessels, complex systems

## Introduction

Since 2010, the improved bilateral relations between Indonesia and Vietnam have brought significant proximity of the two nations. In 2013, the adjacency between the two nations reached its peak due to a strategic partnership between Indonesia and Vietnam was being commenced. The Strengthening cooperation between them makes Vietnam as the only strategic partner of Indonesia in Southeast Asia (Anjaiah, 2011).

However, this optimistic trajectory has been tested by a tough measure exercised by Indonesia's President Joko Widodo in encountering rampant illegal fishing in Indonesian waters. The policy has resulted in the demolition of, among else, Vietnamese fishing vessels; and has also led to near-clash and incidents in the maritime domain.

After Joko Widodo came into office on 2014; Indonesia astonished the world by Joko Widodo’s administration firm

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policy to detonate domestic and foreign fishing vessels caught stealing fish in Indonesian waters. The policy known as "Sink the Vessels" (STV), commanded by the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries "Susi Pudjiastuti", one of Indonesia's ministerial rank that is infamous of her dedication for delivering her duties to protect Indonesia's marine resources. By far, public in Indonesia regarded the STV policy as a symbol of Indonesian government considerable measure to pursue "Global Maritime Axis" agenda by President Joko Widodo. This agenda demands the ability of Indonesia to secure its maritime security and national sovereignty for the sake of the future Indonesian prosperity. Some says that this policy originated from Joko Widodo's utmost admiration toward Indonesia's vast territorial waters and the long-standing 'archipelagic outlook'. Rather than valuing Indonesian archipelago as a natural disadvantage, President Widodo regards the waters for its economic potential and as national strength (Gindarsah & Priamarizki, 2015, p.15). Indonesian governance acknowledges the policy as highly important.

Post to STV Policy, the mass media keep broadcasting the amount of Vietnam vessels seized by Indonesian Patrol Ship in Natuna Waters (Al Birra, 2017). From the geopolitical approach, obviously the involvement of South China Sea claimant states is inevitable on this issue (for instance Vietnam, in our case, as a claimant state over the South China Sea territorial dispute whose fishermen have

been heavily be caught doing illegal fishing activities). Thus, it is predictable that the detonation of foreign fishing vessels policy triggered protests from neighbouring countries, especially from whose fishing vessels seized and detonated by Indonesian government. Nevertheless, Indonesia has consistently and firmly stood to their STV policy and unwilling to reconsider its unilateral movement, even in the midst of opposition by neighbouring states (Deny, 2018).

Interestingly, so far, Vietnam's toughest response to Indonesia's national policy is in the form of reminder that such unilateral action violates the 2003-2004 Continental Bilateral Agreement between Indonesia-Vietnam which is still in the process of delimiting its authority. Other than those steps, Vietnam also sent diplomatic note to Indonesia to maintain good bilateral relations between the two countries, by prioritizing the principle of cooperation and understanding by stating that Indonesia must "(pay) attention to the strategic partnership of the two nations" in dealing with Vietnamese fishermen" (Parameswaran, 2015).

Departing from the above mentioned context, authors questioned how Indonesia's foreign policy action did not further aggravated Indonesia-Vietnam relations post "Sink the Vessels" policy? This article probes to describe the complex systems that enchain Indonesia and Vietnam behaviour during the rising tension. We argue that complex systems approach as a conceptual tool offers a

noteworthy insight to understand this case, especially to captured holistically, Indonesia – Vietnam relations post “Sink the Vessels” policy. Using this approach, we draw the interaction between symbol system, interest system, and role system that encapsulated the unbreakable relations between Indonesia-Vietnam, even in the turbulence ocean. This article found that the response of Indonesia and Vietnam in tackling the problem stems primarily from the linkage between the three systems that helps escape the security dilemma. Using qualitative research methods and in-depth interview with some primary sources, this paper conducted in-depth study to thoroughly uncover Indonesia-Vietnam relations post STV policy.

### **Theoretical Framework: Foreign Policy Action and Complex Systems Approach**

According to Vinsensio Dugis, foreign policy is traditionally understood as authoritative action taken or is officially decided by governments both to maintain the desirable aspects of the international environment and to change its undesirable aspects. Therefore, in its basic understanding, foreign policy encompasses of statements and actions taken by state subjects to its relations with other external actors, states or non-state actors (Dugis, 2008). Then, in order to analyse foreign policy, there are three main features of foreign policy: sources of foreign policy, the process of producing the sources become policy, and actions taken to implement it (Dugis, 2008).

By this explanation, we could agree upon three different trajectories to distinguish the three main features of foreign policy. Theoretical instrument for analysing foreign policy can be divided into three groups; systemic theories, societal theories, and state-centric theories (Barkdull & Harris, 2002, pp.63-90). According to Dugis (2008), the first stream denotes to scholars that eager to scrutinise and elaborate foreign policy by questioning about how the international system implicates the conduct of foreign policy between actors in international relations. In our words, to tackle the dynamic of external environment within international system, states adjust their existence through foreign policy as a strategic instrument. The second group advocates foreign policy by emphasizing the importance of domestic aspects, especially the combination of domestic politics and the culture of a particular country. These theories stress on the spirit to dismantle the “black box” of state as unitary actor and highlight the importance of domestic political factors over foreign policy. The third group is theories that chase the answers to questions regarding foreign policy within the structure of the state, and this also includes the individuals who transmit and implement foreign policies on behalf of their country. In other words, individuals and their occupying institutions are seen as instrumental in analysing foreign policy. Our theoretical framework supported the first group among those three theories of foreign policy. Whereby, we aim for systematic explanation regarding Indonesia-Vietnam foreign policy action

to tackle the dynamic of external environment within international system, especially to manage the rising tension cause by illegal fishing activity. Therefore, we utilize complex systems approach to draw systematic explanation regarding those two countries bilateral relations during the rising tension.

The complex system as a terminology used in this paper exhibits the concatenation of interconnected and interdependent parts between actors in international system. According to Rusadi Kantaprawira (1987), 'the system can be defined as a unit which is formed of several elements, or components, or part of each other are in a latch-hook attachment and functional. Each is cohesive with one another. It means the aggregate of the unit maintained intact its existence. The system can be construed also as something higher than just a means, procedures, plans, schemes, or method. Furthermore, the system is a mechanism patterned manner and consistent, even the mechanism is often automatic'. It means that the system is everywhere around us, the world is the shed of systems.

According to Kazuko Hirose Kawaguchi (2003), a complex system can be understood as a set of systems; In other words, the most important features of the complex systems are interconnectedness and the emergence, i.e. the fact that the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of the components (Cîndea, 2006). However, the most important thing is not to decompose a complex system into lower level

complexities, or to increase the level on a scale of increasing complex, instead, we should look at the logic of the interaction and the manner in which it reaches the emergence of the phenomena. In complex systems, from the living cell to the global social system, we can essentially identify infinity of levels of the organization (Kusumawardhana, 2017). Departing from this vantage point, we define complex system as a collective of two or more simple systems.

Based on our conceptual understanding, in any action and interaction within international system, actors stand as an important and dynamic unit in our realm of thought. Within a larger social unit (for instance, an actor within a family, society, nation, or a collection of nations or the international community as a whole in the case of international relations), we could conceptualized an actor as a complex entity, especially if the actor has expectations and principles of action are implicated by various restraints, and when, that actor contributes in the growth, maintenance, and development of that larger social unit while making its own view thereof, mediated by symbols of various kinds (Kawaguchi, 2003, p. 45). Realities that bind the human world, however, encompasses many systems in each of which a diverse action principle operates. This is how, actors in our view, situated in myriad uncertainty and ambiguity within international system as a larger social unit that constrain their existence.

Therefore, making a social phenomenon into parsimony theoretical hypotheses, is not a trivial matter, but requires careful intellectual work to deal with all its complexity, uncertainty, and diversity intact. In this context, the best that one can do is to draw the simplest possible ideal type that represent the essential characteristic of that complex phenomenon. To embrace this possibility, Kawaguchi (2003) depicted some guidance regarding this ideal type by explaining that actors' types of behaviour can be construed into three different and independent types of behaviour, each of this type can be exercised as analytical concept or in his terminology "ideal types". Departing from the enormously complex array of definite behaviour that takes place in the world; he illustrated the three types of behaviour are interest-oriented behaviour, role-expected behaviour, and symbol-oriented behaviour, and the three types of systems that correspond thereto are *interest systems*, *role systems*, and *symbol systems*, respectively (Kawaguchi, 2003, p. 46).

Moreover, Kawaguchi elaborates his theoretical framework into three clear definition as follows; *interest-oriented behaviour* signifies the logic of an individual actor, while *role-expected behaviour* is the behaviour likely of an individual actor according to the logic of the whole within which he or she is situated (Kawaguchi, 2003, p. 46). Furthermore, *symbol-oriented behaviour* is behaviour whose frame of reference is a symbol system. Wherever, symbol systems exist self-sufficiently of reality

(matter and energy); furthermore, if this independent system interacting in intense dialogue with reality- a dialogue that involves of recurrent interactions with it- these systems develop ordered relations among themselves that can be stated as laws (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.48).

The study toward this certain symbols within these systems has often been done in social sciences, commonly focus on analysing shared knowledge among members of certain society, especially to understand the impact of this shared knowledge toward decisions and actions of those members, and how those constitutive aspect contribute to the preservation and control of social structures or social order (such symbols include laws, norms, traditions, ideologies, and ideals such as democracy or human rights). Additionally, the bodies of knowledge equipped by social, cultural, and natural sciences are themselves among the symbol systems that can be studied by social scientists (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.49). To summarize these three aspects, in our explanation - state to state interactions determined by interest-oriented behaviour, constrain by *role-expected behaviour*, and influenced by *symbol-oriented behaviour*.

The first system, "Interest", plays an important role that dictates state behaviour in the international system. In other words, state behaviour in international system tends to come from the most basic behaviour that is which promotes the continued existence of the actor. Whereby, if we agree upon the

survival of an actor as an important interest among the member of international system, and regard behaviour that obliges to promote one's own survival as interest-oriented behaviour. In the case of a nation, let us call such behaviour national-interest oriented behaviour (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.51). Moreover, a certain actor's interests originate internally from that actor and that they abide in isolation from the whole in which that actor is situated (if the actor is a nation, it refers to the international community) (Kawaguchi, 2003).

Meanwhile, the role system is based on the existence of a goal that must be attained if the system itself is to remain in existence (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.59). Whereby a system's goal is accomplished through a synchronised division of labour, known as role differentiation, among the members of the system (the actors or parts). The share of labour expected of an individual member is known as a role expectation, and behaviour grounded solely on a role expectation can be understood as role-expected behaviour (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.59).

The third system was symbol system. The concepts of an interest system and a role system can be understood as specific abstractions from certain features of social phenomena or interactions between actors internationally that can be elucidated by, correspondingly, both at the level of individual logic and the logic of the whole. This third category of system can be recognised though a careful study toward the same social phenomena or

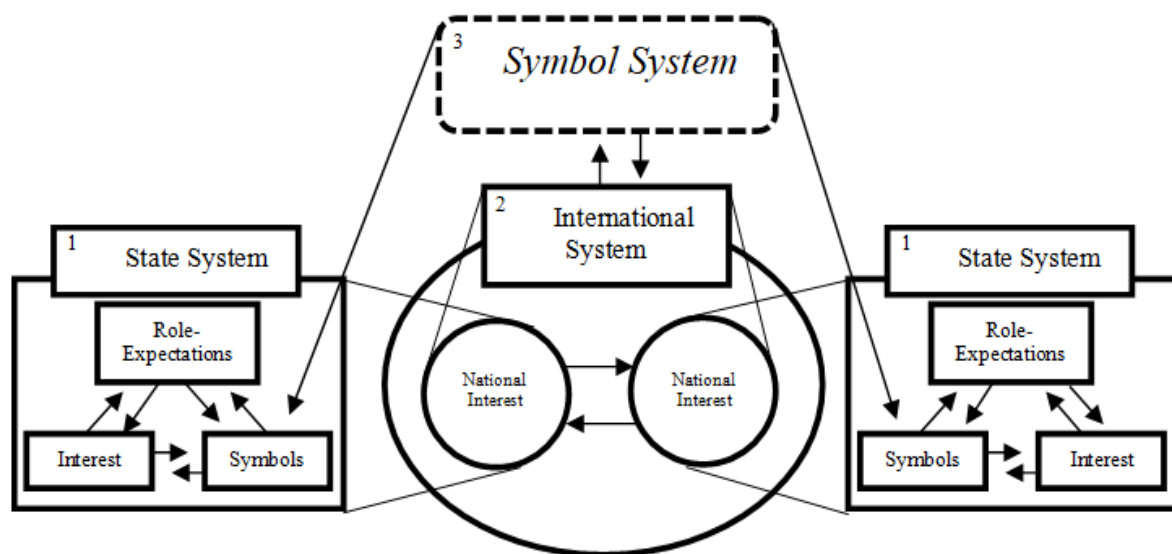
international relations among actors: a symbol system, that is, a special case of a system of signs that embody and carry those aspects of social phenomena or international relations that Kawaguchi (2003) mention as the 'realities' thereof (or aspects of 'matter and energy'). Among states, according to our understanding, common or general interests are shaped by a similar process that produce a certain meaning through symbols. Example of this can be seen when international community was discussing about the international regime to manage resources on ocean floor or the sea-bed and in the subsoil thereof (In the context of development or exploitation and exploration) at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (Treves, 1982). In our opinion, the interests and positions of any nations featured by these specific maritime features progressively converged in one trajectory and those of the 'have-not' nations gradually converged in another, while repetitively attract conflictual relations among them.

Based on the above mentioned conceptual discussion, we draw complex system analytical framework to analyse Indonesia-Vietnam relations post "Sink the Vessels" policy (Figure.1). Our framework consists of three level of systems analysis, namely State System, International System, and Symbol System. The linkage of those three systems captured the interaction between states in international system, particularly in our case, Indonesia-Vietnam relations to tackle illegal fishing problem that tested their bilateral relations lately. In the remaining

sections of this paper, we will examine both state system of Indonesia and Vietnam based on interest system, role-expectation system, and symbol system. Thereafter, we draw some explanation about the linkage between Indonesia-Vietnam national interest with the

international system as a larger system in the social structure that encapsulated their existence. At the last analysis, we scrutinize the influence of symbol system during the rising tension between Indonesia-Vietnam in this issue.

**Figure.1 Complex Systems Analytical Framework**



### **State System: Interest, Role Expectation, and Symbol in a Turbulence Ocean**

In this section, we will analyse *Interest*, *Role Expectation*, and *Symbol* as the foundation of state system, both Indonesia and Vietnam. By elaborating each part of the three system within state, we hope for gaining comprehensive understanding about the nature of actor in the rising tension at play within the larger system.

#### **On Indonesia: *Wawasan Nusantara*, Nationalistic Ideology, and Global Maritime Axis**

According to Kawaguchi (2003, p.52), in order to come with a clear understanding about how national

interests evolve by the dynamic of international system, we must perceive the nation itself as a system and to enquire the explicit or implicit objective has been established to uphold that system's existence. Furthermore, he emphasized that the key to grasp comprehensive understanding toward conflict resolution among actors lies on the processes by which conflict is resolved among conflicting interests of the individuals and interest groups that make up a nation must be measured carefully, in conjunction with the nature of the overall national interests that arise as a consequence of those processes and that are asserted in relation to the external world. Consequently, this would



encourage our efforts to scrutinise the structure within the black box of nation-state as a system, in the context of its foreign policy.

Friedrich Ratzel believed that the state is a geographical organism. Understanding Indonesia from this point of view, we can denote, the archipelago geographically has acted as an important aspect that influenced the history of Indonesia. In fact, until now, it is the largest archipelagic state in the world. Its gigantic size is salience by the geostrategic location for the Asia Pacific region both geopolitically or geoeconomically, which controls four of out of the seven major maritime chokepoints in the world (Habir et al, 2013). In addition, the rich natural resources be inherent in within the archipelago, including oil and gas, intensifies the strategic importance of Indonesia. Despite geographical advantages, there is a paradox due to the size of the country and its resources also brings insecurities in Indonesian policy makers as they struggle to ward off external threats and to manage internal security threats to the unity of the country (Laksmiana, 2011). According to Ahmad Derry Habir *et al* (2013), this outlook has been influenced by a history of the archipelago that highlighted – with few exemptions such as the precolonial kingdoms of Sriwijaya and Majapahit – geographically limited land-based powers.

After Indonesia claims its independence from colonial power, they delineated its territorial sovereignty based

on the Netherlands 1939 Ordinance on Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones, which had divided the archipelago into several areas. These territorial divisions and the three-mile extent of its territorial sovereignty were later apprehended as the source of Indonesia's vulnerability to foreign maritime infringement in the archipelago. Consequently, the vastness of the archipelagic boundaries at that time presented a real challenge for Indonesia, some of which, related to the increase of smuggling and growing regional unrest. In December 1957, to tackle the urgency of this concerns then Prime Minister Juanda Kartawidjaja deprived the 1939 Ordinance and declared Indonesia an 'archipelagic state'. The archipelagic state referred to a belt of baselines (islands and water between islands) that contained the territory of the Indonesian modern state. Thereafter, when President Suharto's New Order came to power, they formulated the Archipelagic Outlook or *Wawasan Nusantara* in 1966, based on the Juanda Declaration.

With the official commitment to the *Wawasan Nusantara* concept, the New Order government engaged on diplomatic campaign for the recognition of the Archipelagic State concept in the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and various international forums. Eventually, the two decades of Indonesian diplomacy's efforts led to the concept of archipelagic state was adopted in 1982 by the third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III). Indonesia ratified the UNCLOS in 1985 through Law No. 17/1985 (Habir *et al*,

2013). Moreover, to spread the concept of the archipelagic state throughout the country, citizenship and national resilience education became the most important agenda of the new order regime. Regardless of these domestic and international developments, the *Wawasan Nusantara* has been principally inward-looking instead of outward-looking in spirit, it appears from the tendency to emphasize continuously on Indonesia's strategic geographical location, a distrust towards potentially exploitive external powers wishing to take advantage of the location and Indonesian resources, and a concern for national unity in the face of separatist threats.

After the emergence of Post-New order democratic system, President Yudhoyono navigated Indonesia's foreign policy to an active and outward orientation grounded on democratic and idealistic values. In May 2005, during his first foreign policy speech, shortly after he was elected president, he defined Indonesian nationalism as 'a brand of nationalism that is open, confident, moderate, tolerant, and outward looking' (Yudhoyono, 2005). Moreover, frequently the president highlighted the same themes, emphasising tolerance as an important component of freedom and democracy. For example, when he opened the 2011 Bali Democracy Forum, he stated, 'we believe that freedom must be coupled with tolerance and rule of law, for without them freedom leads to unbridled hatred and anarchy' (Habir *et al*, 2013). The shifted trajectory of Indonesian foreign policy from inward-looking to more open

and outward-looking, multilateral-oriented, and grounded to norms within international law during President Yudhoyono leadership, in some extent overshadowed the discourse about *Wawasan Nusantara*. Arguably, in the practice of these foreign policy, the traditionally independent and active foreign policy of Indonesia – as formulated by the first Indonesian Vice President Mohammad Hatta – has been adapted to the present globalisation period. Whereby, the core interest of Indonesian foreign policy, at that period, was perceived as reinforced Indonesia's image as independence and activism as a peace maker, confidence builder, problem solver, and bridge builder (Rosyidin & Tri Andika, 2017).

However, Indonesia's foreign policy after the election of Joko Widodo (Jokowi) shows a different trajectory. Unlike his predecessor, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Jokowi has seemed less ambitious in bringing Indonesia onto the world stage (Rosyidin, 2017). Based on Jokowi's vantage point, Indonesia is a "regional power with selective global engagement" (Widodo and Kalla, 2014, p.13). Following a mantra of 'pro-people diplomacy', Jokowi desires to transform Indonesia's foreign policy into an action that can contribute directly to the interests of the people. This involves a foreign policy orientation that leans towards the domestic rather than the international (Rosyidin, 2017).

The most salient example of Jokowi's aggression is his policy of

sinking illegal fishing boats. In 2014, Interior Minister Tjahyo Kumolo asserted that the government should take aggressive decisions on behalf of the dignity and honour of the country, defending its territorial sovereignty and protecting natural resources (CNN Indonesia, 2014). To support this commitment, Indonesia strengthened STV policy by creating special task force to Eradicate Illegal Fishing namely SATGAS 115, which was endorsed by President Joko Widodo through Presidential Decree No. 115 in 2015 (Marta, 2017). In other words, SATGAS 115 signifies Indonesia's commitment to defend its sovereignty through reinforcing law enforcement capacity by initiating a one-roof enforcement system, which consists of elements of the Indonesian Navy, National Police, BAKAMLA, and the Republic of Indonesia Prosecutor's Office. Also, to facilitate coordination, encourage synergy, and carry out facilitation functions in combating illegal fishing. This nationalist sentiment was also evident when Indonesian officials later announced that the government would sink 71 foreign vessels as Indonesia commemorated 71 years of independence (Parameswaran, 2016).

Besides, Indonesia also reacted directly after Chinese fishing boats trespassed the waters off Natuna, an Indonesian territory. To demonstrate his commitment to defend Indonesia's sovereignty, Jokowi held a cabinet meeting from the warship KRI Imam Bonjol, sending a signal to the Chinese government that it should not violate on

Indonesian sovereignty. As reported by Jakarta Post, Cabinet Secretary Pramono Anung blatantly underlined this symbolic political stand point, "[N]atuna belongs to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia [NKRI] and that's final. As the head of government and the head of state, the President wants to make sure that Natuna always remains part of Indonesia" (Jakarta Post, 2016). At this point, we could grasp some understanding that Indonesia's under Jokowi's leadership wants to pursue their national interest based on its archipelagic outlook as a symbol, economic interest, and limited strategic interaction with external actors as a role-expectation. This system behaviour reconfigured Indonesia's state system to be more inward-looking rather than outward-looking orientation.

### **On Vietnam: Self Reliance and Independence, Anti-External Aggressor, and Economic Prosperity**

Overtime, Vietnam's foreign policy has experienced dramatic shifts one way or another, propelled by structural changes at the international system level and domestic political change. The first major theme of Vietnam's current foreign policy is the stress on independence and self-reliance. This is based on three historical legacies: first, resistance to foreign intervention during the colonial and post-colonial eras; second, as a member of the socialist camp when Vietnam was caught in the crossfire of the Sino-Soviet dispute; and third as a dependent ally that was left isolated when the Soviet Union suddenly collapsed in

1991. According to Vietnam's National Defence white paper, it stated "Vietnam consistently realizes the foreign guideline of independence [and] self-reliance..." (Ministry of National Defence, 2009). These two nationalistic values consistently uphold by Vietnamese government by formulating their national defence policy based on three principals namely "Three no's": Vietnam consistently advocates neither joining any military alliances nor giving any other countries permission to have military bases or use its soil to carry out military activities against other countries." (Ministry of National Defence, 2009: 21–22). These three principles stand as safeguard for Vietnam from being involved in scaremongering contestation between external powers, which often undermines the existence of Southeast Asian countries, especially the United States and China. Furthermore, Independence and Self Reliance, as Vietnam's primary identity as a sovereign country are highly reflected in the Vietnam defence white paper published in 2009. As in the following sentence,

As a nation having experienced wars for national independence and freedom, Vietnam thoroughly respects other countries' independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and national interests on the basis of fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and international laws. At the same time, Vietnam demands that its independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and

national interests must be respected by other countries. Vietnam advocates against the military use of force first in international relations but is ready to resolutely fight against all aggressive acts (Ministry of National Defence, 2009, p.19).

Territorial integrity and unity as a representation of Vietnam's independence, embedded very strong for this country as a sovereign country. Historically, this is very reasonable, if we look at the long history of Vietnam, where its existence is determined by the struggle to fight external aggressor that threatened the very existence of this country. Therefore, in the national defence corridor, the country's white book reinforces the importance of independence and self-reliance as state identities. As follows "Vietnam's national defence is always closely linked to the CPV and the State's guideline of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development in external affairs, and the foreign policy of openness, multilateralization and diversification in international relations" (Ministry of National Defence, 2009, p.21).

Besides emphasizing the affirmation of the principles of Independence and Self-reliance as guidance for Vietnam to build its foreign policy trajectory. Vietnam also holds firm and consistent for, the importance of maintaining an international legal regime as a common ground in the region and internationally. Especially in solving

various disputes that Vietnam must dealing with, in the contemporary era. This is reflected in the Vietnam Defence White Paper with the following sentence “Vietnam’s consistent policy is to solve both historical and newly emerging disputes over territorial sovereignty in land and at sea through peaceful means on the basis of international laws” (Ministry of National Defence, 2009). Obviously, threats related to the territorial integrity faced by Vietnam are certainly related to the dispute in the South China Sea which has the potential to trigger open conflict between Vietnam and the larger Chinese government.

Therefore, on a larger context Vietnam considers the existence of UNCLOS to be very important to be a joint reference, especially as a basis for defining the problem of territorial disputes in the South China Sea. In this case, UNCLOS as an international maritime regime is acting more than as a common norm but also an identity that gives meaning to Vietnam’s territorial integrity in the international system. This acknowledgment appears in the following sentence.

“As for disputed sovereignty rights at sea, though there is sufficient historical evidence and legal foundation to prove Vietnam’s undeniable sovereignty over water areas and islands in the East Sea, including the Paracels and the Spratlys, it is always ready to negotiate with all parties concerned to find peaceful

solutions to those disputes in conformity with regulations of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Ministry of National Defence, 2009, p.19)”.

In addition to UNCLOS, when Vietnam dealing with the issue of territorial disputes in the South China Sea, ASEAN as a regional institution has an important role also. Vietnam’s national defence white paper reflecting this notion, whereas Vietnam expressed the importance for all parties to the dispute to respect the Declaration of Conduct regarding South China Sea problematic condition, and jointly resolve the discussion of the Code of Conduct for resolving the problems that occurred (Ministry of National Defence, 2009, p.19). In the light of this view, we can understand ASEAN is also an important institution for Vietnam, because discussions related to COC with China are carried out within the framework of dialogue between ASEAN-China. Consequently, Vietnam promotes defence cooperation between ASEAN countries based on security cooperation mechanism to build the ASEAN community.

The second major theme of Vietnamese foreign policy is the multilateralization and diversification of external relations. This objective stands for the role-expectation of Vietnam as an actor in contemporary international system. On May 20, 1988, the VCP Politburo adopted a seminal policy document known as Resolution No. 13 entitled, “On the Tasks and Foreign Policy in the New Situation.”

This document codified Vietnam's foreign policy by giving priority to economic development and calling for a "multi-directional foreign policy" orientation with the goal of making "more friends, fewer enemies" (*thêm bạn, bớt thù*). Specifically, Resolution 13 called for Vietnam's extrication from the conflict in Cambodia in order to normalize relations with China, develop relations with ASEAN states, Japan, and Europe, and "step-by-step" normalize relations with the United States.

This trajectory also denote Vietnam's foreign policy want to pursue "cooperation and struggle" among nations, especially to pursue economic international integration for the welfare of Vietnamese society. In 1986, Vietnam adopted "đổi mới" or renovation and, two years later, mapped out a major reorientation of its foreign policy. To overcome its isolation and secure access to markets, Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia in 1989. Subsequently, to ensure external support for "đổi mới", Vietnam adopted a policy of pro-active international integration and became a member of all major global economic institutions. To ensure its strategic autonomy more broadly, Vietnam diversified its diplomatic and strategic relations. As a result, today Vietnam is a member in good standing of major global institutions, a leader in ASEAN, and increasingly integrated in the global economy (Thayer, 2017).

#### **The Linkage Between Indonesia-Vietnam National Interest to Tackle**

#### **Illegal Fishing as a Maritime Security Threat**

The main argument of this paper is that the problem of Illegal fishing between Indonesia and Vietnam within unsettled Economic Exclusive Zone near to Natuna Islands occurred in interconnected complex systems. In this sense, a complex system formed when interactions between actors' process dynamically in nature. A system is an integrated whole in which this process of interplay cannot be broken down and the actors cannot be separated (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.30). Especially, within international system, any states decide their actions in the context of its relationships with other states; constitutively among them share basic assumption that other state's acting in their own national interests. Thus, a relationship between two states often is one in which national interests collide. This situation, according to Kawaguchi could lead the nature of interaction between actors in international system into "a relationship that will inevitably lead to the use of force, a struggle for life by every available means," or even what could be called a Hobbesian state of nature (Kawaguchi, 2003, p.52). We claim the recent challenge faced by Indonesia-Vietnam regarding Illegal fishing can be another empirical record that when state-state relations intertwined as complex systems, the key to manage tension lies on the synergy between those relations. When it does, even if the sovereign states anxious might have appeared to be motivated only by their national interests or by the desire for power, all of them

shared common internalized ideals because they had come into being in the same region (Kawaguchi, 2003).

High tensions between Indonesia and Vietnam over IUU Fishing activity started from Indonesia's policy to destroy hundreds of vessels, mostly Vietnam origins. Popular online media in Indonesia recorded that since serving as Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Susi Pudjiastuti, managed to implement STV policy. The number of illegal fishing vessels that had drowned since October 2014 until April 1, 2017 were 317 ships, with details as following: 142 Vietnamese vessels, 76 Philippines vessels, 21 Thailand vessels, 49 Malaysian vessels, 21 Indonesian ships, 2 Papua New Guinea ships, 1 China ship, 1 Belize ship and 4 ships from unidentified country (Kuwado, 2017). Indonesia's decision to firmly execute the policy was aimed to secure the maritime resources, as stated by Susi Pudjiastuti as the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. "I am not talking about the territorial authority, but about maritime resources and fish. Fish in our exclusive economic zone is our fish" (Tempo.co, 2016).

Responding such situation, Vietnam realizes the need to express its concern about Indonesia's firm policy related to IUU Fishing. On August 2015, Hanoi's foreign ministry spokesman stated that Vietnam is highly considerate about Indonesia sinking Vietnamese vessels for illegally fishing in Indonesian waters. According to Tuoi Tre News, Le Hai Binh, the spokesperson for Vietnam's

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Vietnam felt "deeply concerned" about the sinking of fishing boats belonging to Vietnamese fishermen who had violated Jakarta's territorial waters. Binh added that Vietnam had sent a diplomatic note to Indonesia Thursday recommending that Jakarta "(pay) attention to the strategic partnership of the two nations" in handling Vietnamese fishermen (Parameswaran, 2015).

In recent decade, Vietnamese-Indonesian relations have come into a new period of collaboration. The ongoing Vietnam-Indonesia Strategic Partnership was designed to improve economic relations throughout the 2014-2018 period. The target set up to US\$10 billion of two-way trade by 2018 (Ward, 2017). During Deputy Prime Minister, Vuong Dinh Hue's recent visit to Indonesia in July 2017, he highlighted the importance of Vietnam's regional economic connectivity. He specifically mentioned the significance of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which both Vietnam and Indonesia are a part of. Hue also reinforced Vietnamese and Indonesian collaboration on common viewpoint initiatives such as sustainability, natural disaster response, water management and food security. However, Hue's list of cooperation did not mention about maritime and fishery issues. As the economic relationship between the two nations has grew more massive, the lack of cooperation over these prominent issues is even more glaring (Ward, 2017). Accordingly, the Indonesia's STV policy undermine the reinforcement of bilateral

relations between two states. At this point, it is likely that both Vietnam and Indonesia are standing on a critical juncture, where the complicated problem that occur needs to be immediately responded.

Complex systems approach offers more comprehensive picture of how interaction between states bring up a very complex system; based on interest behaviour, role expectation behaviour, and symbol behaviour. This interconnectedness may affect and transform state interests and behaviour. The explanations fit into the way Indonesia-Vietnam projected its interest and role as an agent of socialisation to respond problematic situation among ASEAN countries. By utilizing any opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue among actors, both by bilateral and multilateral, the problem could be settled by formal or informal interaction between them. This is the basic element to elevate constitutive common purpose to organize mutual issues between actors. In this case, if the social arena to maintain common purpose between them was not exist, the problem between Indonesia – Vietnam regarding IUU Fishing will be more complicated to be resolved.

Since Indonesia implementing STV policy to manage its maritime security, Vietnam put serious consideration about Indonesia act of sinking Vietnamese vessels who illegally fishing in its waters (Parameswaran, 2015). Pham Thu Hang, spokesperson for Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that Vietnam had

contacted Indonesia about the sinking of Vietnamese-flagged boats and appealed to Indonesia to deal with the fishermen "in accordance with international laws, based on humane spirit and on the relations between Indonesia and other countries." (Thayer, 2014). In addition, in a separated explanatory note by the government of Vietnam, it stated that "to closely coordinate in dealing with issues relating to fishermen and fishing boats that encroach each side's territorial waters on the basis of humanity and friendship" (MoFA, 2013). Meanwhile, Jakarta insists that the policy is not only needed but it should be executed given the scale of the problem of IUU Fishing in Indonesian waters.

Under this condition, refer to Robert Jervis (1976) argument in his famous work "Perception and Misperception in International Politics", this condition conventionally exacerbate the spin of international insecurity among disputing parties. Because the attempts of one state to achieve security precipitate the feeling of insecurity of other states (Jervis, 1976). Jervis, as one of many realist scholars in International Relations, believes that all states tend to assume the worst of others and respond accordingly. These unintended and undesired consequences of actions lead to a situation called 'security dilemma' that Herbert Butterfield sees as that 'absolute predicament' that 'lies in the very geometry of human conflict. [...] Here is the basic pattern for all narratives of human conflict, whatever other patterns may be superimposed upon it later.'



(Jervis, 1991). From this point of view, the unilateral movement by Indonesia's government to seek security by implementing hard measure regarding IUU Fishing could trigger hostility of Vietnam's perception toward Indonesia's action. In addition, according to Jervis "The perceptions and reactions of the other side are apt to deepen the misunderstanding and the conflict". Nonetheless, after the implementation of this unilateral movement, not to mention all the incidents between state apparatus regarding IUU Fishing law enforcement, the relationship between Indonesia-Vietnam is far from hostile condition. An interview with a mid-level diplomatic staff from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia confirm this statement "It is true, our firm policy did not exacerbate Indonesia-Vietnam bilateral relations. Moreover, in 2017, Indonesia and Vietnam had undergone an improvement of both states defence bilateral cooperation". This event also publicly records by credible media:

As Indonesia-Vietnam relations have developed over the years..... Recent defence dialogues have focused on further steps to implement their memorandum of understanding inked in 2010, efforts to develop defence ties more generally including joint exercises, dialogues, and military equipment, and means to better manage challenges, including the treatment of fishermen amid some recent

clashes at sea (Parameswaran, 2017).

Moreover, responding to Indonesia's concern toward IUU Fishing, Indonesia-Vietnam utilizing any instrument to promote IUU Fishing as a common challenge through various multilateral dialogues. For instance, at ASEAN Regional Forum on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing held in Bali, Arif Havas Oegroseno, Deputy Minister for Maritime Sovereignty, Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, highlighted the possible measures to address the issue. Countries in the region should ratify the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and its provisions should be promoted and adopted as regional norms. Regional instruments should also be established with focus on combating the IUU fishing, enhancing coordination and information sharing, as well as building cooperation in law enforcement (ARF workshop, 2016).

At the same forum, the delegation of Vietnam conveyed a statement highlighting its national efforts and perspective on IUU Fishing. One important aspect emphasized is that Vietnam has fulfilled its diligence and obligation to combat IUU Fishing by undertaking specific measures to prevent, deter, and eliminate IUU Fishing. The implementation occurs in form of educating fishermen not to conduct IUU Fishing in other states' waters (ARF Workshop, 2016). ASEAN Security community, in this view, play its role as an agent of socialization and social arena

to resolve common problem in the region through a set of community practices.

In this case, Indonesia's unilateral movement through discursive practices within the system was projected as a common problem for Vietnam. This condition constructs a "We Feelings" and alleviate mistrust among actors. This situation displayed through Vietnam delegation statement "Vietnam also underscored its willingness to cooperate with other countries, because it too is a victim of IUU Fishing conducted by foreign vessels (ARF Workshop, 2016). This statement was further reinforced by Vietnamese National Assembly and had passed the revised Law on Fisheries, including new features to strengthen illegal unreported unregulated (IUU) fishing fight (Fis.com, 2017). This constructive measure followed with a recent Vietnam's national effort to tackle IUU Fishing through implementing national action plan to prevent, mitigate and abolish illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing until 2025 (Vietnamnews.vn, 2018). The approach of the two countries that emphasizes constructive dialogue in understanding the problems that occur, reinforces our opinion that through habituation in the practice of community at the international level, it can encourage peaceful inquiry in the event of conflict between members of the international community. Certainly, this is possible because of the linkages within the system, where both countries interact as social units continuously. The recent statement by Vietnamese Ambassador to Indonesia Hong Anh

Tuan, support this paper point of view that under difficult time both countries uphold the primacy of regional peace, security and stability "ASEAN is very important for Vietnam and Indonesia and we see the great role of Indonesia in strengthening ASEAN cooperation," (Antara News, 2018). Therefore, this paper prudently claims that Indonesia-Vietnam relations post "Sink the Vessels" policy is guided under the framework of complex systems. The Indonesia-Vietnam cooperation to tackle the problem stems primarily from each country's interest, role-expectation of others, and the symbol associated with them. Thus, the construction of inter-subjective meanings to develop shared understanding, identity, and interest which mutually constitutes as non-material aspects that affect their relations could maintain the anarchy situation and even eliminate the possibility of security dilemma.

### **The Role of Symbol System to Tackle the Rising Tension Between Indonesia-Vietnam**

The next explanation to reinforce this article proposition toward Indonesia-Vietnam peaceful diplomatic conduct post to STV policy stand on the symbol-oriented behaviour that developed within symbol system as a common ground between both countries. In this context, constructivist International Relations scholars already saturated with the discourse about the primacy of norms as ideational matters that govern state-state relations, especially when it comes to ASEAN countries. One of them, Amitav

Acharya (2009) shows that the members of ASEAN have generally adhered to one of the core diplomatic norms enshrined in its constitutional documents, the non-use of force in intra-mural relations, during a thirty-year period: 1967–97. This is the main basic norm that enfold bilateral relations among members in ASEAN, including Indonesia-Vietnam in our case. At this point, norms are beneficial to coordinate values among states and societies.

In this context, Indonesia-Vietnam (Both are ASEAN members) adherence to the non-use of force in intra-mural relations as the core diplomatic norms could help them to negate the perception of threats against each other, even counteract the misperception of their increasing military capacity as a preparation of war. Considering Indonesia-Vietnam military build-ups, both countries experienced increased military expenditure in the last 10 years. Since arms races usually emerge as an impact of threat perception that elevate security dilemma among the conflicting countries, the increase of military expenditure can create a detrimental effect because it could be perceived as preliminary sign as some organized preparations for war.

According to the data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), military expenditure in Indonesia increased from US\$ 3722 Million in 2009 to 7911 USD Million in 2017. Whereas, in similar timeline with Indonesia, Vietnam's military expenditure

is increasing from US\$ 3044 Million to US\$ 4962 Million (SIPRI, 2018). Nonetheless, under this condition, Indonesia's STV policy did not trigger security dilemma between Indonesia-Vietnam. To put it clear, this article strengthening Deutsch's proposition that within security community military build-ups between members did not automatically lead to competition and security dilemma. History reveals itself, Southeast Asian countries have managed interstate disputes short of armed conflict and developed peaceful settlement of disputes through consultation and dialogue. To that extent, despite intra-mural squabbles and differences, Indonesia-Vietnam diplomatic step to tackle the problem reinforcing the fact that norms matter in shaping solution between conflicting countries.

The recent clash between two countries state apparatus and how the backlash can be managed is a perfect example of the way norms could help states to coordinate values among states and societies. The incident in Natuna occurred when the ministry's patrol boat Hiu Macan intercepted five foreign fishing vessels from Vietnam that had trespassed into Indonesian EEZ in Natuna. At the same time, the Vietnamese Coast Guard boat demanded those boats to be released (Republika.co, 2017). The incident led to a collision and sinking of a Vietnamese fishing boat. Around 44 fishermen jumped into the sea and were later rescued by the Vietnamese Coast Guard.

For ASEAN members States, the norm of non-use of forces to settle dispute is not something new. How Indonesia-Vietnam handle the clash between them in this problem stands for this norm, to tackle the possibility for the incident endangering Indonesia-Vietnam bilateral relations, the Indonesian and Vietnamese governments have diplomatically agreed to solve the Natuna incident that occurred in Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in May 21, as stated by Marine Affairs and Fishery Ministry's Secretary, General Rifki Effendi Hardijanto. Responding this incident in a conducive and cooperative manner, Indonesia and Vietnam have carried out a joint investigation to settle the incident, which according to Indonesian authorities, the Vietnamese coast guard has tried to forcibly free five fishing boats and their crew detained in waters near the Natuna Islands (Reuters.com, 2017).

Moreover, during Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc diplomatic visit to discussed about opportunity to elevate cooperation between the two countries to new heights, bringing tangible benefits to their peoples. Apart from bilateral agreement for facilitating market access between two countries, in order to aiming bilateral trade on amount of US\$10 billion. PM Phuc also thanked the Indonesian Government for the return of 177 Vietnamese fishermen arrested and detained in Indonesia, proposing both sides regularly exchange information and handle the issue of arrested fishermen and fishing vessels in a humanitarian spirit and in accordance with the good relations

between two countries. Then, the two sides agreed to accelerate the establishment of a hotline on fishing and sea-related issues, while actively coordinating to implement the joint communiqué on voluntary international cooperation against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing signed last month. Also, the two leaders welcomed the progress in the demarcation of the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) between the two countries after 11 rounds of negotiations and consented to work harder for a solution suitable for both sides and in line with international law (vietnamnews.vn, 2018). The constructive way between Indonesia-Vietnam to manage IUU Fishing as maritime security threats that endangering their bilateral relations is a solid proved that both countries shared common visions and committed to increasing cooperation and coordination at international forums, especially within the frameworks of ASEAN.

### **Conclusion**

This article explained that lately Indonesia and Vietnam relations has been tested over IUU Fishing activity. The tension started from Indonesia's firm policy to destroy hundreds of vessels, mostly Vietnam origins. Authors reach the conclusion by answering question of how could Indonesia's foreign policy action did not further aggravated Indonesia-Vietnam relations post "Sink the Vessels" policy? The answer to this intriguing question is derived from our core argument that the rising tension

between Indonesia – Vietnam post “Sink the Vessels” policy took place within complex systems that connecting Indonesia-Vietnam as actors in international politics. Which has developed a long-term habit of peaceful interaction and ruled out the use of force in settling disputes. Our analysis shows that based on interest system, role-expectation system, and symbol system, Indonesia-Vietnam determined their national interest. Meanwhile, the symbol system practically, influence by symbol system at the larger social unit which is ASEAN. Both of them, within complex systems, contribute as an agent of socialisation to respond problematic situation among ASEAN countries through community practices. Thus, our systematic description about Indonesia-Vietnam dynamic relations post unilateral movement by Indonesia exposes that Indonesia-Vietnam cooperation to tackle the problem stems primarily from each country’s interest behaviour, role-expectation behaviour, and symbols associated with them. Therefore, the construction of inter-subjective meanings to develop shared understanding, identity, and interest which mutually constitutes as non-material aspects that affect their relations could manage anarchy and even escape the security dilemma.

#### About the Author

**Rusadi Kantaprawira** is Professor of International Relations at Bakrie University who has expertise in Indonesian Political System. He is well

recognised as an intellectual figure who brought systems approach and systems philosophy in studying social and political science in Indonesia intellectual milieu. His research interest includes Systems approach, Systems Philosophy, Indonesian Political System, and Indonesian Democracy. E-mail: [rusadi.kantaprawira@bakrie.ac.id](mailto:rusadi.kantaprawira@bakrie.ac.id).

**Arry Bainus** is Associate Professor in Department of International Relations, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia. Currently, Arry Bainus serves as Vice Rector I for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Universitas Padjadjaran. E-mail: [wr1@unpad.ac.id](mailto:wr1@unpad.ac.id). [Scopus ID] 57192382311.

**Indra Kusumawardhana** is lecturer at Department of International Relations, Universitas Pertamina, Jakarta. He is Doctorate candidate at Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia. E-mail: [indra15008@mail.unpad.ac.id](mailto:indra15008@mail.unpad.ac.id). [Orcid] <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8801-7506>.

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